

THE BIBLE

AND ITS

INTERPRETER



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THE BIBLE AND ITS INTERPRETER.

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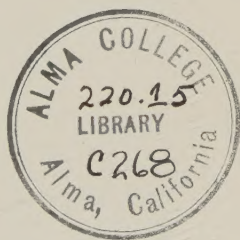
THE BIBLE

AND

ITS INTERPRETER.

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SECOND EDITION.



JOHN JOS. McVEY,
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PREFACE.

THIS little treatise is intended to be a popular presentation of the question of questions between Catholics and Protestants. The writer has avoided technicalities and distinctions that would of necessity find place in a work purely theological. His aim has been to present the matter in a plain, simple way, but at the same time to give his readers the substance of Catholic teaching on this important question.

Protestants who read this little work are reminded that the phrase, "Catholic Church," is employed in the same sense in which it was understood in the days of the Fathers, and even of the Reformers. In the time of St. Augustine the *Catholic* Church was the one undivided church diffused over the whole earth—*unitas diffusa*, "unity diffused." It was no aggregation of separated churches. The Saint (Lib. de Hæres.) enumerates eighty-eight Christian denominations, all of which he places outside the Catholic Church. At the time of the Reformers the word, "Catholic," still retained its true and ancient signification. This fact was so keenly felt by Luther that when translating the Creed into German for his small Catechism, he omitted the word, "Catholic," and substituted the word, "Christian:" "I believe in the Holy Ghost, one holy *Christian* Church." (Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, III., p. 79.)

WOODSTOCK COLLEGE, WOODSTOCK, MD.

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PART I.

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

THE QUESTION.

NOT many months ago when a prominent Episcopalian minister resigned his pastoral charge and became a Catholic, the anti-Catholic press had many hard things to say about his "recession." What seemed, however, to call forth the most general complaint was that an educated man should give up his right to private judgment and sink into a state of intellectual thralldom. One periodical sarcastically said of the distinguished convert: "He has gone where we think he properly belongs, and we wish him all the surcease of sorrow which comes from the putting one's thinking machinery under the mastership of an infallible authority." (*The Independent*, Dec. 7, 1899). This statement would be little worth recording at the present time were it not the popular expression of a popular difficulty. Whenever a person of prominence joins the Catholic Church he is represented as falling from the high estate of an intellectual being, and is spoken of as a man whose thinking must henceforth be done by proxy. Judging from the language of the secular and anti-Catholic press one would imagine that liberty of thought is so incompatible with the Church's infallibility that a

convert to Catholicism can no longer use his private judgment to decide what he is to eat, drink, or say to a friend when he meets him in the street.

Of course a little reflection would teach one that the Church's infallibility is restricted to religion and to truths which intimately affect religion. In all other matters Catholics may have as much liberty of thought as the followers of Tom Paine; while in religious questions on which the Church has not expressed her mind, they may think as freely as the schoolmen in the days of Durandus. These are elementary notions of the Catholic religion, but they are completely ignored in the sweeping charges made against infallibility.

At the bottom, however, of all these charges is a question of the gravest import. It may be called the question of questions between Catholics and Protestants; and Catholics surely have no reason to suppress it or to let it be obscured by secondary issues. The question is this: Who shall be our interpreter of the divine word? No matter what attacks are made on the Bible, as it is the word of God "it cannot pass away;" and as long as the Bible remains, men of thought will scrutinize its pages and, like Baltassar of old, will ask, "who shall read this writing and declare the interpretation thereof?" We know the answer that Protestants give to this momentous question. They tell us that each one is his own Daniel; that private judgment is the supreme interpreter of God's book. Catholics, on the other hand, reply that the interpreter is a Church endowed with infallibility, and that to her alone God has given "the spirit and the knowledge and the wisdom" to read

aright His sacred message. It is our purpose to examine these two answers, and to show that when there is question of choosing our interpreter of Holy Writ, it is to the Church we must go as to the one on whom alone the spirit of the Lord has rested. If there be any intellectual slavery in submitting to her judgment, it is the slavery of the intellect when made captive by truth; it is the bondage to which St. Paul alludes when he speaks of those "weapons of warfare" that are mighty "unto the destroying of counsels" and "unto the bringing into *captivity* every understanding" (2 Cor. x. 5). If there be any "surcease of sorrow" in resting on the Church's bosom, it is that for which Christ Himself provided when He gave her pastors and teachers that henceforth we be no more "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv. 14).

A DEFINITION.

Catholics and Protestants are not at variance in defining the Rule of Faith. They agree that it is the authority which makes known to us with clearness and certainty all the truths that we are obliged to believe as divinely revealed. The reader should weigh well this definition. He should especially remark that it is not enough for a Rule of Faith to point out to us one, two or three truths of revelation; it must point out all the truths which Almighty God wishes us to believe. Moreover, as there is only one Rule of Faith for all, that Rule must be sufficiently clear for all; and as the assent of faith must be certain, so also the Rule of Faith must be certain, or, in other words, it must indicate with inerrancy the truths that are to be believed.

APPLICATION OF THE DEFINITION.

According to Catholics the Rule of Faith is an infallible Church handing down and interpreting the truths of revelation; according to Protestants it is the Bible as interpreted by each one's private judgment.¹ Of course, in this exercise of private judgment Protestants do not reject the use of all external aids. If a man knows Greek and Hebrew he may have recourse to the original text of Holy Scripture. If he is rich enough to buy commentaries he may also avail himself of their assistance. A man who has recourse to such external aids will undoubtedly form a private judgment quite different from that of the man who has to read his Bible in the vernacular and without the aid of a commentary. However, there is one source of help to which all, both rich and poor, learned and illiterate, can have recourse, and that is the Holy Ghost. But as the Holy Ghost never promised His help to individuals for the particular work of exegesis, it follows that private judgment, besides the task of interpreting some very difficult text, has the new and perhaps more difficult task of discovering whether the Holy Ghost is helping in the interpretation or not. But no matter what aids private judgment may employ in interpreting Scripture, it reserves for itself, according to the common Protestant theory, the final decision as to the true meaning of the Sacred Text.

¹ In this brief treatise we cannot examine the views of any particular party in the Anglican Church.

THE CATHOLIC CLAIM.

✓ We claim that, whatever the true Rule of Faith may be, the Bible as interpreted by private judgment is not the Rule of Faith that Christ appointed. The grounds on which we rest our contention may be briefly summarized as follows: 1. The abolition of the living Rule of Faith first established by Christ is not proved. 2. The right of private judgment to be the interpreter of Scripture is not found in Scripture. 3. The theory of private judgment destroys the fundamental Protestant belief as to the inspiration of the whole Bible. 4. The Scripture is too obscure to be made a Rule of Faith for all believers. 5. The Scripture, obscure in itself, is rendered far obscurer by prejudice and passion. 6. The Protestant Rule of Faith begets a destructive liberty of thought. 7. It begets a religion without dogma. 8. It is the parent of disunion. 9. It subjects the highest of all laws to a method of interpretation unknown in the history of law. 10. It leaves the majority of Christians up to the time when printing was invented without any Rule of Faith. 11. It was the Rule of Faith employed by the heretics in the first years of Christianity, but rejected and reprobated by the Saints. Here are a number of reasons militating against the fundamental theory of Protestantism. Each reason will be now examined.

INFALLIBILITY NOT DISPROVED.

Before private judgment sets up its interpretation of Scripture as the sole Rule of Faith, it should prove that the living Rule of Faith which once existed in the

Church has been abolished. In the time of the Apostles the Rule of Faith was the authority of a living body. But infallibility was not conferred on the Apostles for their personal benefit, it was granted them for the benefit of the Church. It was no less necessary to the Church after their death than it was during their lifetime; in fact, after their death, on account of dissensions, and new generations of teachers and believers, it became far more necessary. Moreover, Christ did not say to His Apostles: "Go forth, teach all nations: I shall be with you till your death." He said: "Go forth, teach all nations: I shall be with you all days even to the consummation of the world." Therefore, before private judgment can be set up as a Rule of Faith, clear proof must be given that the first Rule of Faith established by Christ has been abolished. But there is not a single text in Scripture that so much as insinuates the abolition of that first living Rule.

THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT NOT PROVED.

Protestants maintain that we are to believe nothing as of faith unless it can be found in Scripture. In the very same breath they tell us that Scripture as interpreted by private judgment is the sole Rule of Faith. Now, we ask, where is this found in Scripture? There is not a text in the Bible that asserts either explicitly or implicitly that the Scripture as interpreted by private judgment is the Rule of Faith. Remark that neither Scripture alone, nor private judgment alone, is the Rule of which we speak. The Protestant Rule of Faith is the Scripture as interpreted by private judgment.

Catholics can challenge the keenest of their opponents to point out a text of Scripture in which such a compound Rule of Faith is laid down.

True, Christ told the Jews to "search the Scriptures." But it was not for all the articles of their faith, but only for the proofs of His divine mission that He sent them to the Sacred Volume. In like manner, the Church says to Protestants: "Search the Scriptures, for they bear testimony to me." She is willing to let them go to Holy Writ and exercise their private judgment in searching out her notes and credentials, but she hopes and prays that the search may be more fruitful than it was when the Jews read the Scriptures—and put Christ to death. This very text quoted by Protestants to show the sufficiency of the Bible in matters of faith brings sadly to mind how insufficient it was when appealed to on a most vital question and by the people in whose language it had been written.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND INSPIRATION.

Every orthodox Protestant believes in the inspiration of all the books of the New Testament. But as inspiration is a purely supernatural fact it can be known only by revelation. Hence every true Protestant believes as a revealed truth the inspiration of the gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke. The inspiration of the Acts of the Apostles is also a matter of belief. But nowhere in the Bible is it revealed that these three books are inspired. It is a contradiction, therefore, for Protestants to claim that the Bible is the sole Rule of Faith. Here are three revealed truths which they profess themselves

bound to believe, and still these truths are nowhere pointed out by their Rule of Faith. It is useless for them to appeal to the words of St. Paul: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. iii. 16). In the Greek, the text is ambiguous and may mean: "All Scripture that is inspired of God," etc. Moreover, as Protestant commentators themselves admit, the Apostle is speaking only of the Old Testament. To avoid controversy we have limited our argument to the three books of the New Testament that were not written by Apostles. The argument, however, could be safely urged even against many of the Apostolic writings. There is no testimony in the Scripture that any of the gospels is *inspired*.

We think, however, that a still more serious difficulty confronts Protestants. Men of some learning now insist that the whole Bible is not God's word, that many of its passages, if not some of its entire books, contain neither revealed truth nor any truth at all. "The Bible," it is said, "is a complex collection of most varied documents. They contain much that is admirable and valuable, but also legends, myths, contradictory assertions, accounts expressly falsified to suit later times, mere human fictions and words spoken in the name of the Lord without there having been any authority for attributing to them such a sacred character." (*The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1900.) This statement represents the teaching of men who are now sifting the faith of the Christian world. How will Protestants stand the ordeal? On whose authority will they rely so that their old faith in the Bible fail not? Here is a diffi-

culty for those who reject the Church's authority. Or if they submit to the new teaching, who will show them in the Bible what is fiction and what is not? But granting that Protestants will cling to Holy Writ and to the inspiration of all its books, there are difficulties still that render it unfit to be a Rule of Faith.

THE BIBLE OBSCURE.

A Rule of Faith ought to be clear in its statements. It is intended for all, for the ignorant as well as for the learned. Now to assert that Holy Scripture is a book whose statements are sufficiently clear for the generality of mankind, is to fly in the face of the most evident facts. The number of denominations into which the Protestant Church is divided ought to convince Protestants that, no matter what the Bible may be, it is not clear for all in its doctrinal statements. Indeed, if we take up half a dozen commentaries on any book of Scripture, we find a variety of interpretations for nearly every important text. If the punishment of hell is said to last "forever," the meaning of the word, "forever," is disputed. If we read that a man must be born again of "water and the Holy Ghost," the word, "water," it is contended, does not mean water at all. When we come to the words: "This is my body," the sentence is so explained that it turns out to mean "This is not my body."

Now in this last case our Blessed Lord's words are only four in number, and seem very clear indeed; yet in the library of Woodstock College there is a little book, published in Ingolstadt in the year 1577, that gives *two*

hundred different interpretations of these *four* words. The author, Christopher Rasperger, says that he has faithfully collected his two hundred interpretations from the authentic writings of men who glory in following the Gospel. The truth is that in spite of the many clear passages in Scripture—and we are far from claiming that the number is small—the Bible cannot be considered clear except by those who have never made a deep study of it.

A DIFFICULTY ANSWERED.

✓ Protestants sometimes tell us that, though the Bible is obscure in places, it is sufficiently clear in *fundamentals*. But no one can assert that it is clear in fundamentals unless he first knows what the fundamentals are. Now, who will enlighten a man on this important question? The Bible nowhere lays down a list of fundamentals, and since the authority of the Church is rejected, there is only one possible solution of the difficulty and that is to have recourse to the Holy Ghost. Well, then, if our inquirer be a true Baptist he draws up a list of fundamentals and places among them Baptism by immersion; if he be a devout Episcopalian the Holy Ghost tells him to take Baptism by immersion off the list. If he be an orthodox Lutheran the Holy Ghost inspires him to put down the Real Presence as a fundamental; if he be a fervent Presbyterian the Holy Spirit teaches him that the doctrine of the Real Presence is a most pernicious heresy. If he be a loyal Methodist the Holy Spirit directs him to insert the divinity of Christ; if he be a Unitarian the Holy Ghost informs

him that the Arians were right and that Christ was a mere man. Now, the validity or the invalidity of Baptism, the presence or absence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, the divinity or mere human character of our Blessed Lord are certainly fundamental questions if the word "fundamental" has any real meaning at all. Yet what a diversity of opinion even among Protestants on these very questions! This alone ought to be sufficient to show them that their theory about the clearness of Scripture in fundamentals is contradicted by facts.

The examples we have given strikingly illustrate how unreliable private judgment is in the interpretation of some of the most important texts of Scripture. Nor does the Holy Ghost seem to interfere with its free use, or lead it any other way than its possessor wishes to go. But apart from this consideration, it seems inconsistent in Protestants to reject the assistance of the Holy Ghost when there is question of the Church's public teaching, and claim His assistance for themselves in their own private investigations.

ANOTHER DIFFICULTY.

Some, avoiding the dangerous word "fundamentals," tell us that the Scripture is clear enough in "all things necessary for salvation." Without disputing about the various ways in which a thing may be necessary for salvation, we think a few texts should prevent our adversaries from seeking refuge in this last distinction. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). Protestants of to-day admit the truth and importance of this text. Still, they must know that from

the time of Luther the nature of justifying faith has been a matter of dispute. It is hard to find even Protestant writers agreeing among themselves upon the question. But if the matter is so clearly settled in Scripture, how has it given rise, how does it still give rise to so much controversy between so many millions of Christians? There must certainly be some obscurity on the point. And, nevertheless, "faith" is one of the things necessary for salvation: "Without 'faith' it is impossible to please God."

Again, the meaning of the text: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5), is sharply disputed by commentators. Some maintain that the word "water" means the material substance which the word commonly denotes; others claim that it signifies the purifying influence of the Holy Ghost. If the text be perfectly clear for both learned and illiterate, how arises this ever-recurring contention about its meaning? And still, there is question here of a thing necessary for salvation: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God."

Again, if we take up the text: "Preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16), another controversy arises. Some say that the objects of belief are only a few clear truths laid down in Holy Scripture; others make them co-extensive with the whole teaching of the Church, or the whole Gospel preached by the Apostles, for what is preached is the Gospel, and what is preached

is to be believed. Now, who will settle for ordinary readers the exact meaning of this text? And still that its meaning should be settled is a matter of vital moment, for there is question here again of something necessary for salvation: "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

AN OPPONENT'S ARGUMENTS.

Before dismissing this important question as to the obscurity of Scripture, it may be well to examine a few passages from a Protestant theologian whose works are known and read throughout the length and breadth of the land. We refer to Charles Hodge, D. D., the famous professor of Princeton. The passages we shall quote are taken from the sixth chapter of the first volume of his "Dogmatic Theology." After all we have said about the obscurity of the Bible, Dr. Hodge's words may seem, at first sight, astounding; but we shall see that he so limits them that the clearness of the Bible becomes purely relative, and in no way suffices for a universal Rule of Faith.

"The Bible," writes Dr. Hodge, "is a plain book. It is intelligible by the people. And they have the right and are bound to read and interpret it for themselves; so that their faith may rest on the testimony of the Scriptures and not on that of the Church." We willingly admit that Christians have a right to read the Scriptures either in the original or in approved translations; but that their faith is to rest on the Scriptures, and not on the testimony of the Church, is a statement not found in the Scriptures.

"It is not denied," continues Dr. Hodge, "that the

Scriptures contain many things hard to be understood; that they require diligent study; that all men need the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to right knowledge and true faith." This is precisely the difficulty. Are all men capable of the "diligent" study that the Scriptures require? Is the farmer, the day-laborer, the soldier, the sailor, the blind and those who cannot read; and for that matter is the broker, the banker, the merchant, capable of this "diligent" study? And even if they are capable, are they likely, taking all human probabilities into account, to give "diligent" study to the working out of the true meaning of Holy Scripture? It is a very erroneous notion to imagine that the providence of God adapts itself merely to what men are capable of doing, and not to what men actually do in the common run of life.

Dr. Hodge resumes: "It is not denied that the people, learned and unlearned, in order to the proper understanding of the Scriptures, should not only compare Scripture with Scripture, and avail themselves of all the means in their power to aid them in their search after the truth, but they should also have the greatest deference to the faith of the Church . . . For an individual Christian to dissent from the faith of the Universal Church (*i. e.*, the body of true believers) is tantamount to dissenting from the Scriptures themselves."

This last admission seems to us to give a death-blow to the whole Reformation movement. Luther when he made the Bible the sole Rule of Faith dissented from the faith of the Universal Church. When Calvin

denied the Real Presence he went against the universal belief of Christendom. But letting these considerations pass, we still ask how the "unlearned" can compare "Scripture with Scripture?" If they should attempt to do so, is it sure that their comparison would end in the discovery of the truth? Dr. Hodge tells us, for example, that for the right understanding of the text: "The Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28), we should turn to the text: "I and the Father are one." (John x. 30.) But suppose some Unitarian friend should tell us that for the right understanding of the text: "I and the Father are one," we should turn to the text: "The Father is greater than I," or perhaps to the text: "That they may be one as we also are one," or to the words: "I said you are gods." (John x. 34.)

But "all men," says Dr. Hodge, "need the guidance of the Holy Ghost in order to right knowledge and true faith." Certainly, they need His guidance. But the question is, how are they to secure it? Well, says Dr. Hodge, "His guidance is to be humbly and earnestly sought. The ground of this rule is twofold. First, the Spirit is promised as a guide and teacher. He was to come to lead the people of God into the knowledge of truth. And secondly the Scriptures teach, that 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The unrenewed mind is naturally blind to spiritual truth." That the Holy Ghost was promised as a teacher and a guide we cheerfully admit. But He

is nowhere promised as the *immediate* guide of each individual. He guides into all truth, but through God's appointed ways. When we are told that if we "ask" we shall "receive," it does not follow that when we ask for our daily bread, it will be sent to us like manna from heaven. If we ask it in the right way, God no doubt will send it, but it will come through the wheat-field and the mill and the oven. In like manner, when the Holy Spirit is promised for the right understanding of God's word, it does not follow that He will come immediately to each individual. He will lead us, no doubt, into all truth; but He will do so through the Church, the Pastors and the Teachers whom Christ has appointed.

Dr. Hodge again tells us that to understand the Scriptures aright, a man must be of a spiritual mind: "The unrenewed mind is naturally blind to spiritual truth." This fact seems to us one of the most powerful reasons for admitting the establishment of an infallible Church. Christ foresaw that spiritual men would be few, and that the generality of mankind would be blind to spiritual truth. For this reason it was most natural that He should establish a Church which should make clear to men the truths which otherwise they would be too blind to see.

A VARIABLE RULE.

The lack of spirituality in mankind leads us to consider another serious objection against the Protestant Rule of Faith. If the Scriptures were far clearer than they are, still, prejudice would render them wholly

inadequate as a norm of belief. A Rule of Faith must be a safe and unvarying indication of the truth, hence it must be removed from all disturbing influences. A compass is of little use to a mariner unless it is set up where it will be free from the attractive force of iron and of other disturbing metals. Now, just as certain substances act on the magnetic needle and deflect it from its meridian, so, early associations, family interests, personal considerations, national feeling, in a word, prejudices, act on the mind and draw it away from the one line of truth. With so many powerful influences acting upon it, private judgment can hardly be relied upon for a nice and impartial interpretation of numberless doctrines intimately affecting human life. In fact, it is no violation of charity to suspect that the common Rule of Faith among Protestants is not the Bible as interpreted by private judgment, but the Bible as interpreted by family traditions and an inherited opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church. Is it not just possible that the greater number of Protestants go to the Sacred Scripture not to ascertain the true religion, but to find arguments to defend their own? This method of biblical enquiry and its results are well set forth in an epigram by S. Werenfels, a Protestant theologian:

*“Hic liber est in quo quaerit sua dogmata quisque,
Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua,”—*

which may be roughly paraphrased:

Men ope this book, their favorite creed in mind;
Each seeks his own, and each his own doth find.

Whatever a Christian of the sixteenth century may have thought of the reliability of private judgment as a Rule of Faith, we believe that the history of Protestantism during the last three centuries and the practical working of the Rule leave only one rational opinion on the subject. The variations of Protestantism year after year point out quite clearly that the Reformers in setting up private judgment set up a misleading light for the nations. Only one century after the rise of the Reformation Bossuet could give to the world two volumes entitled: "A History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches." The work is still well deserving of perusal. It is a record of the errors of private judgment—a history of "the light that failed."

LIBERTY OF THOUGHT.

The next difficulty that may be urged against the Protestant Rule of Faith is that it allows a destructive liberty of thought. Liberty, no doubt, is a priceless blessing, and liberty of thought is perhaps one of the forms of liberty to which we cling most fondly and on which we are most loath to see any restraint imposed. Hence arises the popular difficulty to which we referred at the beginning of this treatise. But here we think the enemy's weapons may be seized and directed against himself. Uncontrolled liberty of thought, far from being a blessing, may be a curse. It was a curse for those who disputed among themselves and said: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" and who then went away and "walked no more with Him." (John vi. 67.) It was a curse for those who wrested certain things

“hard to be understood” in the epistles of St. Paul, as they did also “the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.” (2 Pet. iii. 16.) We find this same curse resting on those haughty spirits of the early Church, who like Arius, Nestorius and Eutyches subjected Holy Scripture to their own free thoughts, and then “made shipwreck concerning the faith.” (1 Tim. i. 19.)

If the great truths of religion were the deductions of human reasoning, human reason might be competent to modify them or even reject them. But as they have been revealed by Almighty God; as they belong to a world beyond the ken of experience; and, above all, as very many of them contain great, deep mysteries, private judgment is unfit to be a guide to their true meaning. To give it such a position is to place it where it will lead the most highly endowed intellects away from religion altogether, or plunge them into investigations that will prove their ruin. Catholic scholars well know that even with an infallible guide before them, they tremble when they have to examine such great mysteries as the Incarnation, the Trinity, the Liberty and Providence of God, the Elevation and Fall of man. And when they look back to the proud scholars who ventured into those same mysterious depths without the guidance of the Church, what do they behold but men succumbing to the fate of Pharaoh and his host: “The wind blew and the sea covered them, and they sank as lead in the mighty waters.”

To show how human reason, when left to itself, is no safe leader in religious enquiry, there is no need of having recourse to the mysteries of revealed religion.

In investigating the truths of merely natural religion the human intellect, when unaided, has always shown itself an erring and unfortunate guide. Abundant proofs of this fact may be found in T. W. Allies' work: "The Formation of Christendom." Many chapters in this great history might well have been entitled: "The wanderings of the human intellect." To this question, however, we shall return later.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

But says Dr. Hodge: "This right of private judgment is the great safeguard of civil and religious liberty. If the Bible be admitted to be the infallible Rule of Faith and practice, in accordance with which men are bound on the peril of their souls, to frame their creed and conduct; and if there be a set of men who have the exclusive right of interpreting the Scripture, and who are authorized to impose their interpretations on the people as of divine authority, then they may impose on them what conditions of salvation they see fit. And the men who have the salvation of the people in their hands are their absolute masters." (Dogm. Theol., Vol. 1. c. 6.)

Now, this difficulty which we have heard time after time is a singular fallacy. It attacks infallibility for abuses that infallibility precludes. If the Church is not infallible, then of course she can put any interpretation on Holy Scripture that she pleases, and impose on men what conditions of salvation she thinks fit. But if she be infallible she can not act in this way; her interpretation of Scripture will be given under the Holy

Ghost's guidance, and the ways of salvation she lays down for men will be according to the mind of Him who is always with her. To argue against the Church's infallibility from the strange things she would do if she were not infallible, is a freak of logic that is well worth remembering.

As to the conflict between infallibility and civil liberty there is little to be said. The conflict is a mere fancy—an airy nothing that finds a local habitation only in Protestant polemics. Infallibility did not interfere with the civil liberty of our Catholic soldiers and sailors in the late war with Spain. It did not interfere with the civil liberty of the Catholic soldiers fighting under the British flag in Africa. It has never yet interfered in our national, state, or municipal elections. We doubt if the right of private judgment has such a clear record. Is it the "great safeguard" of civil liberty that Dr. Hodge claims it to be? What about the Penal Laws in England and Ireland, and the three dreary centuries during which Catholics were deprived of their civil liberties? There is nothing like this in the history of infallibility.

A RIGHT USE OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

Besides religious questions not yet determined by any infallible authority, there is one great religious question for the settlement of which a certain liberty of thought is not only lawful but necessary. Private judgment has to examine the credentials of the teacher who claims infallibility. The teacher's claims can be settled for an enquirer in no other way. But as soon as the creden-

tials are found to be authentic then private judgment is henceforth, in certain matters, to be directed by that teacher. Our Divine Lord appealed to the private judgment of His hearers. He told them to consider His works; He sent them to the Scriptures as to writings that bore testimony to Him. But as soon as His authority was admitted, He no longer had recourse to arguments, He allowed no more liberty of thought. His word was law. In like manner St. Paul had to prove to the Galatians that he was an Apostle, but with regard to the doctrine that he had preached to them he said: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." (Gal. i. 9.) It is a fatal mistake to imagine that because a man can safely use his private judgment in discovering the true Church, he can safely use it in sifting all the doctrines of that Church. If Christ placed in His Church the means of salvation He must have rendered her visible, and therefore discoverable by the light of each man's intellect, but that He should subject her doctrines to the interpretation of each private intellect is a very different thing. "It is much easier," wrote Newman before his conversion, "to form a correct and rapid judgment of persons than of books or of doctrines. Every one, even a child, has an impression about new faces; few persons have any real view about new propositions. There is something in the sight of persons or of bodies of men which speaks to us for approval or disapprobation with a distinctness to which pen and ink are unequal. The multitude have neither the time, the patience, nor the

clearness and exactness of thought, for processes of investigation and deduction. Reason is slow and abstract, cold and speculative; but man is a being of feeling and action; he is not resolvable into a *dictum de omni et nullo*, or a series of hypotheticals, or a critical diatribe, or an algebraical equation. And this obvious fact does, as far it goes, make it probable that, if we are providentially obliged to exercise our private judgment, the point towards which we have to direct it is the teacher rather than the doctrine." (Essays Critical and Historical, vol. II., Essay XIV.)

If Protestants are such staunch advocates of the right of private judgment, we may be allowed to ask, why do they not praise its exercise in a case where such exercise is clearly allowed? Why do they not rejoice when a man's private judgment shows him that Protestantism is untenable and that he must become a Catholic? But we think we see here the inconsistency of the Reformers themselves. The apostles of the new religion laid down as a Gospel principle that each man had a right of judging for himself in matters of religion, but as soon as any one's judgment differed from theirs, he was forthwith denounced in the strongest terms. Those who dared to disagree with "Dr. Martin Luther" heard something from the heresiarch which they could ever afterwards remember. Servetus for holding what he considered to be the teaching of the Scriptures was burned at the stake by Calvin. And we all know how the Catholics of England and Ireland suffered and bled for adhering to the Church which their private judgment told them was the Church of Jesus Christ.

A RELIGION WITHOUT DOGMAS.

Another necessary consequence of the Protestant theory of private judgment is the creation of a religion without dogmas. Many men of education among Protestants—and where private judgment holds sway it is men of education who make religion—see there can be no union where there is a difference in dogmatic beliefs. They see, moreover, that the determination of dogmatic beliefs by private reason is an impossibility. None know better than they how obscure the Scripture is in matters of dogma. Hence they say: “Let us give up dogma and keep religion; let us abolish creeds and secure re-union.” Now, a religion without dogmas would bring us back to the state of society that existed when St. Paul speaking in the Areopagus said: “I found an altar also on which was written: ‘To the unknown God.’ What therefore you worship without knowing it, that I preach to you.” (Acts xvii. 23.) Without dogma, God and His divine attributes, Christ and His adorable perfections would soon become things unknown, and humanity would be again worshipping at the altar of a God whom it knew not. “Keep that,” says St. Paul, “which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge (*scientiæ*) falsely so called.” (1 Tim. vi. 20.) The truths of revelation, one and all, form a sacred deposit entrusted to the Church by her Divine Founder. To discard any one of them or to set any one of them aside as a source of discord is to offer an open insult to Christ; it is to thrust away into a dark corner the sacred message that He has sent us, simply

because in our ignorance we are unable to decipher it or are too proud to have recourse to her who holds the key.

The Gospel which Christ sent His Apostles to preach was not a Gospel emptied of its dogmas; it was the whole body of truth already revealed or to be revealed later by the Holy Ghost. Nor did the Apostles ever fancy that any of the truths thus communicated to them could be set aside as matters of trivial moment. St. John surely was far from thinking so when at the close of his book of Revelations he wrote: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." (Apoc. xxii. 19.)

We say, then, that the necessary tendency of private judgment when it comes face to face with the great dogmas of religion is to turn away from them as from so many insolvable riddles. If it is to have any religion at all, it will try to have one of its own creation. What kind of a religion this will be, it is hard to say; possibly it will differ little from the phantom that Mrs. Humphry Ward has been pursuing during recent years. We think, however, that private judgment is leading Mrs. Ward in a very natural, though, according to Mr. Mallock, a very illogical direction. The chief mistake of this lady, we believe, is that she is too far ahead of her times.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND DISUNION.

Christian unity is impossible without a principle of authority that will efficaciously control, guide and sub-

due the haughty intellects of men. No kingdom on earth can subsist without some visible power in it capable of unifying and holding together elements that are constantly tending to disagreement. But where there is question of human intellects we have forces that are constantly tending to disagree, and no power can unify them or hold them in check except the power of infallibility.

A religion founded on the Bible alone is, of necessity, a religion of discord; and if any union in matters of religion is to be brought about, it would be better to discard the Bible altogether. As long as the Scripture exists and is considered to be God's word, men will dispute about it. They cannot disregard a book on the correct understanding of which depends their eternal destiny. And with an obscure Bible, on the one hand, and the limitations and divergencies of private judgment, on the other, nothing but discord can exist in religion.

Speaking of the heretics of his own day, the Apostle Jude calls them: "Clouds without water which are carried about by winds . . . raging waves of the sea . . . wandering stars." (Jude i. 12-13.) Never could those men have become, in matters of religious belief, "clouds carried about by winds," "wandering stars," except by setting aside the authority of the Church and adopting the theory of private judgment. What common sense points to as a natural deduction, history points to as a fact. The theory of private judgment was set up by the Reformers of the sixteenth century and it was no sooner applied in practice than

union disappeared among the Reformers themselves. The Reformation split into two great sections—the Lutherans and the Calvinists—and these two sections have been splitting up into others ever since. But a split in a heretical body excites no surprise. “They feel,” says Tertullian (A. D. 150–230), “no reverence even towards their own chiefs. And this is commonly why there are no schisms amongst heretics, because when there are any, they appear not: for schism is their very unity. I speak falsely, if they do not differ among themselves even from their own rulers, seeing that each forthwith mouldeth, according to his own pleasure, the things which he hath received, even as he who had delivered them to him, framed them according to his own pleasure. The progress of the matter is a confession of its nature, and of the manner of its birth. The same thing was allowed to the Valentinians as to Valentinus, the same to the Marcionites as to Marcion,¹ namely to change the faith according to their own pleasure. Finally, all heresies when thoroughly examined, are found in many things to differ from their founders. Very many of them have not even churches. They are without a mother, without a settlement, without a belief; they are outcasts without a home.” (*De Præscript.*, 42.)

To claim that unity exists among the various denominations of the Protestant Church is to claim a new meaning for the word, “unity.” The unity of Christ’s Church is the unity symbolized by the growing tree and

¹ The same should be allowed to the Lutherans as to Luther, to the Calvinists as to Calvin.

the branches in vital connection with it. The unity of the Protestant Churches is the unity of branches severed from the parent stock. Addressing the Donatists St. Optatus (A. D. 330-384) says: "Understand, even though late, that you are undutiful sons, boughs broken from the tree, branches lopped from the vine, a rivulet cut away from its source." (De Schism. Donat. II. 9.) St. Augustine (A. D. 354-430) after enumerating several heretical sects, and amongst them the Novatians, Arians and Valentinians, says: "Wherever these sects are, there also is the Catholic Church, as in Africa, where you (the Donatists) are; not in every place, however, where the Catholic Church is are you or each of those other sects. Hence it is made manifest which is the tree that spreads its branches in rich exuberance over the whole earth, and which are the broken branches that, separated from the life of the root, lie and wither each in its own place." (Contra Crescon., IV., 61.) The metaphor employed by St. Augustine and St. Optatus is taken from an earlier Father who illustrates what Church unity is by another figure no less striking. "When the twelve tribes of Israel," writes St. Cyprian (A. D. 202-258) "were torn asunder, the Prophet Ahias (III Kings xi. 30) rent his garment. But because Christ's people cannot be rent, His coat woven and conjoined throughout, was not divided by those to whom it fell. Individual, conjoined, coentwined it shows the coherent concord of our people who put on Christ. In the sacrament and sign of His garment, He has declared the unity of His Church." (De Unitate Ecclesiæ, c. 7.) It is hard to see how

any stretch of the imagination can represent the various denominations of the Protestant Church as constituting a garment "woven from the top throughout, individual, conjoined, coentwined."

PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND DIVINE LAW.

According to the Protestant Rule of Faith our Divine Lord gave the laws of salvation to mankind but left their interpretation to each individual. He did not even take the precaution of reducing them to writing. As far as we know, He Himself wrote absolutely nothing, except on one occasion when He stooped down and wrote the sins of the Pharisees in the sand. When He sent His Apostles to teach all nations, He said to them: "*Preach* the Gospel." We nowhere read that He gave them a command to write. Six of them have left nothing at all in writing; of the others, three wrote but very little; the remaining three, including St. Paul, seem to have written only as the occasion demanded.

Now if the Rule of Faith for all times and all peoples was to be derived from a book, it seems reasonable to suppose that either Christ Himself or the Apostles would have given us that book, written clearly, methodically and on a very different plan from that of the New Testament. But waiving this point and admitting for the sake of argument that the disjointed books and occasional letters of the New Testament look in any way like a complete and perfect code of laws, we ask, who ever established a code of laws with the understanding that they were to be interpreted by each individual according to his own view of things? If each individual

could interpret for himself the laws of the city or state in which he lives and act according to his own interpretation, we should see nothing but anarchy around us. There are Supreme Courts, and State Courts, and Municipal Courts—all wisely set up to interpret the laws under which we live. Now, Christ's laws are far above all human laws. He too desires peace and harmony in His Kingdom. And yet forsooth, these laws which He came down from heaven to establish and which He sealed with His own blood, He has left to the free interpretation of each individual! The Church in which He desired the greatest concord to exist He exposed to perpetual strife by making each man his own judge of the meaning of the law! This, it seems to us, no one can admit without doing violence to his good sense. Had Christ desired, not concord, but discord among His followers, He could have devised no better means of bringing it about than by making each man his own interpreter of the Bible. Had He cared but little for the dignity of the law which He had come down from heaven to establish, He could have shown His mind in no clearer way than by leaving that law to a few of His Apostles to write, and to everybody to interpret.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND PRINTING.

Again, if our Divine Lord had intended the Bible to be the sole Rule of Faith He should have instructed His Apostles in the art of printing. It is hard to imagine how He could have suffered the mass of mankind to remain for fourteen centuries without the book which He intended to be their guide in matters of belief. Up

to the time when the art of printing was invented the Bible existed only in precious manuscripts that none but the rich could purchase. For millions of Christians all over the world there was no Rule of Faith during all those centuries except the voice of the Church. That the invention of printing was to change all this, is an assertion hard to admit; it is certainly not recorded in Scripture.

Besides, what about the translation of the Scriptures into the various languages of the human race? Here again is a state of things in which numerous tribes would be deprived of a Rule of Faith. And when the translation is made who will guarantee its substantial correctness? How can the poor heathen have certainty that his version is *the word of God*? Dr. Dexter in his "Handbook of Congregationalism" (3d ed., p. 15) complains that the authors of King James' version of the Bible "acted under episcopal bias and in some passages modified earlier and more exact versions in its interest." Dr. Schaff in his "Theological Propædæutic" (3d ed., p. 193) gives a whole page of "false and misleading translations" from the same English version. A licentiate of the Church of Scotland published a book in 1864 entitled "A Plea for a New English Version of the Scriptures," in which he pointed out over seventeen hundred "inaccuracies" in the authorized version. If these things are done in high places, what will be done in the low? If the forty-seven translators who made King James' version of the Bible—a version of such rare beauty and "marvelous English"—could have been acted on at times by bias and

led into error, what are we to think of the version to be made for some of the far-off Filipinos by some frail, half-educated missionary? But perhaps our alarm is vain. When the version shall have been made what will become of it? T. W. Marshall in his "Christian Missions" (Vol. I., c. 1), when treating of "the Bible and the Heathen," tells us that the educated heathen gets from a bad translation of the Bible a disgust for the Christian religion, while the uneducated heathen never comes back to find out what the translation means. Dr. Marshall quotes witnesses to prove that when Bibles distributed among the pagans are not put up on a top shelf, they are used for wrapping up bacon and fruit, and for other servile purposes for which a heathen would not think of using one of his own books. The same writer tells us of a Protestant missionary who found an opium-eater stretched out at full length with his head propped up, not by a vulgar translation of the Bible, but "by a volume of Dean Alford's Greek Testament." This, however, might not be so bad. We have recently seen it stated in the papers that the Chinese are manufacturing sky-rockets and fire-crackers out of the leaves of their Protestant Bibles. It is said that English and American Bible-paper is highly esteemed for this purpose. Really there is something here that looks like the irony of fate. Persons in no way in love with Rome send their Bibles to China, and they come back to them done up as Roman candles. But enough about the translations of the Bible; let us see how the Bible itself was looked upon in other days.

PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND ANTIQUITY.

In the book of Job there is a little bit of advice which it may be wise to follow. It is this: "Inquire of the former generation, and search diligently into the memory of the fathers; for we are but of yesterday." (Job viii. 8.) What then did the ancient Fathers think of the Bible as interpreted by private judgment? The answer is written on nearly every page of Church history. Those who insisted on following their private interpretation of the Scripture in opposition to that of the Church were cut off from the Church of the Fathers and treated as "heathens and publicans." They were not politely invited to remove to some other "branch" of the Catholic Church and there work out their salvation with security. If they were cut off from one branch of the Church they were cut off from all her branches, for she had no branches except those that were in vital and visible connection with one another and with the parent trunk. Now, how did the Fathers look upon those who, following out the theory of private judgment, separated from the communion of that one and undivided Church which dated, according to all, from the time of the Apostles? The Fathers regarded such men as guilty of a grievous crime. According to St. Irenæus (A. D. 130-202), they are successors of Simon Magus. "We were obliged," says the Saint, "to mention him (Simon) now, that thou mightest know of all who in any way adulterate the truth, and damage *the preaching of the Church*, how that they are disciples and successors of Simon, the sorcerer

of Samaria.”¹ (Contra Haeres., I. 27.) According to St. Irenæus then it is a great crime “to damage the preaching of the Church.” We should remember that this Saint had seen Polycarp, and Polycarp had lived in the days of the Apostles. St. Cyprian, another of the earliest Fathers (A. D. 202–258), far from allowing the use of private judgment in separating from the one, undivided and ancient Church, tells us that *no good man ever leaves the Church*. “Let no one,” he writes, “think that they can be good men, who leave the Church. Wind does not take the wheat, nor do storms overthrow the tree that has a solid root to rest on. It is the light straw that the tempest tosses, it is trees emptied of their strength that the blow of the whirlwind strikes down.” (De Unit. Eccles. c. 9.) And further on, the same Saint says: “They cannot dwell with God, who have refused to be of one mind in God’s Church; though they be given over to be burnt in flames and fire, or yield their lives a prey to wild beasts, theirs will not be the crown of faith, but the penalty of unfaithfulness; not the glorious issue of dutiful valor, but the death of despair. A man of such sort may indeed be killed; crowned he cannot be.” (c. 12.)

This then is what the Fathers of the early Church thought of those who following their own private judgment separated themselves from what was known to be the one, true, Catholic Church. Nor is it to be imagined that these heretics directly rejected the authority

¹The Oxford translation of Irenæus, Cyprian and Tertullian is followed except in a few passages where it was found inaccurate.

of Scripture. There was hardly one of them that did not claim that he had Scripture on his side.

In the *Hind and Panther*, Dryden has well described their method of argumentation:

“For did not Arius first, Socinus now,
The Son’s eternal Godhead disavow?
And did not these by Gospel texts alone
Condemn our doctrine and maintain their own?
Have not all heretics the same pretence
To plead the Scriptures in their own defence?
How did the Nicene Council then decide
That strong debate? Was it by Scripture tried?
No, sure; to that the rebel would not yield;
Squadrons of texts he marshall’d in the field;
That was but civil war, an equal set,
Where piles with piles, and eagles eagles met.
With texts point-blank and plain he fac’d the foe,
And did not Satan tempt our Saviour so?”

In the next four lines the poet describes the method employed by the ancient Fathers:

“The good old Bishops took a simpler way;
Each asked but what he heard his father say,
Or how he was instructed in his youth,
And by tradition’s force upheld the truth.”

Nor is this account a piece of mere poetic fiction. Without wishing to pass any censure on “glorious John,” we think his description is more historical than poetical. The early heretics were so anxious to have Scripture on their side that some of them actually cut out of their Bibles every text that seemed to tell against them. If they did not cut out an adverse text, they put a meaning on it equivalent to excision. “One

man," says Tertullian, "altereth the Scriptures with his hand, another their meaning by his exposition. For though Valentinus seemeth to make use of the entire document, he doth not less lay hands upon the truth, though with more cunning skill than Marcion. For Marcion nakedly and openly used the knife, not the pen, since he made havoc of the Scriptures to suit his own matter. But Valentinus spared them, because he did not invent Scriptures to fit his matter, but matter to fit the Scriptures; and yet he took away more and added more, in taking away the proper meanings of each particular word, and in adding systems of things not to be found therein." (De Præscript., c. 38.)

In another passage Tertullian tells us that we must not even allow heretics to argue from the Scriptures; we must keep them to the traditional teaching of the Church. The passage deserves to be quoted at length, as it shows most conclusively that the Rule of Faith followed by the Catholics of to-day was familiar to Catholics in the days of Tertullian. "This heresy," he says, "doth not receive certain of the Scriptures, and whatever it doth receive, by adding to them and diminishing from them, it turneth about according to the plan of its own purpose; and if it receiveth it doth not in fact receive them; and if to a certain extent it furnisheth them entire, nevertheless by devising different *expositions* it perverteth them. An adulteration by the sense imposed is as much as a corruption by the pen. Their (the heretics') various presumptions must needs be loath to recognize those things by which they are refuted. They rely on what they have falsely

trumped up, or have derived from some antiquity. What wilt thou gain, O man most practiced in the Scriptures, when, if thou affirmest anything, it is denied; and when, on the other hand, if thou deniest anything, it is affirmed? And indeed thou wilt lose nothing but thy breath, and gain nothing but vexation. . . . For they also who in like manner affirm that the truth is with them, must needs say that the corruptions of the Scriptures and the falsities in the expositions of them have been rather introduced by us.

“*To the Scriptures therefore we must not appeal; nor must we try the issue on points, on which the victory is either none, or doubtful, or too little doubtful. For though the debate on the Scriptures should not turn out so as to place each party on an equal footing, the order of things would require that this question should be first proposed, which is now the only one to be discussed: ‘To whom belongeth the very faith; whose are the Scriptures; by whom and through whom, and when, and to whom was that rule delivered by which men become Christians.’ For wherever both the true Christian rule and faith shall be shown to be, there will be the true Scriptures, and the true expositions, and all the true Christian traditions . . . Now what they (the Apostles) did preach, that is, what Christ did reveal unto them, I will here also rule, must be proved in no other way than by those same Churches which the Apostles themselves founded; themselves, I say, by preaching to them as well viva voce, as people say, as afterwards by epistles. If those things be so, it becometh forthwith manifest that all the doctrine, which agreeth*

with these Apostolic Churches, the wombs and originals of the faith, must be accounted true, as without doubt containing that which the Churches have received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God; and that all other doctrine must be judged at once to be false which savoreth things contrary to the truth of the Churches, and of the Apostles, and of Christ and of God." (De Præscript., cc. 18, 19, 21.)

Here it may be asked, did not the Fathers, notwithstanding the advice of Tertullian, frequently appeal to Scripture when arguing against heretics? Did they not even in certain cases demand that only Scriptural arguments should be admitted? Yes, this is so. When the Fathers found that the Scriptures were clearly on their side, they were perfectly free to hold their adversary to the written word. But in no case did they dream of setting aside the traditional interpretation of the Sacred Text. No one speaks more emphatically of the fulness and sufficiency of Scripture than Clement of Alexandria (A. D. 150-220), and, nevertheless, in one of those very passages, where he is praising the completeness of the Scriptures, he says: "Just as if one were to become a brute beast, as in the case of those who drank of the poisoned cup of Circe, so a man ceases to belong to God and to be faithful to Him when he kicks against (*ἀναλακτίσας*) the tradition of the Church and jumps into the views of human heresy. (Strom., VI., 16.)

Now, if the early Fathers believed in the private interpretation of Scripture they could never have denied that privilege to heretics, nor would they have spoken

so harshly of those who claimed it. Nay more, if the early Church had admitted the principle of private judgment, as now advocated by Protestants, she committed a grievous crime in driving from her communion men like Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches and a host of others. The ancient Church, it should be remembered, looked on all those outside her pale as aliens to Christ; and if she made them aliens by refusing to listen to their claims of private judgment she committed a terrible sin. But far from considering that she acted sinfully in the matter, the early Church maintained that in erecting barriers between herself and heretics she was only obeying the injunction of St. Paul: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid." (Tit. iii. 10.) These words may be found time after time in the writings of the early Fathers.

And, indeed, if the Apostle of the Gentiles had believed in the right of private judgment, why did he give such an order to Titus? Should he not have rather said: "A man that is a heretic, treat with toleration and respect; honor him for using his right of private judgment; praise him for living up to his Rule of Faith." But the Apostle says none of these things; as Tertullian remarks (De Præscript., c. 16), he does not bid Titus *dispute* with a heretic—his command is to *admonish* him, and if the admonition is not heeded, to avoid him. Surely the Apostle left little room for the exercise of private judgment if, in matters of faith, we are not even to listen to the arguments of a man that is a heretic.

A LESSON TO BE LEARNED.

We read in the Acts of the Apostles (c. 8) how an official belonging to the Court of the queen of the Ethiopians "had come to Jerusalem to adore." As he was riding in his chariot and reading a chapter of Isaias, Philip, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, came up to him and said: "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, unless some man show me?" (Acts viii. 30, 31.) Yes, this is what we need, some one to show us the truth. We are slow, and even dull, when there is question of understanding God's word. Not only was the minister of the Ethiopian queen perplexed by the mysteries of that word; the disciples who had spent three years in Christ's own company and in daily converse with Him were foolish and slow in understanding the same divine message. Preconceived notions, national prejudices, personal ambitions kept them from penetrating the meaning of even their Master's own words. They still needed some one to "open" to them the Scriptures. And so on the very day of His resurrection, as two of them walked together and were sad, He Himself came to them, and with loving kindness showed them what prejudice had previously withheld from their view; and their hearts burned within them while He spoke to them "in the way."

When Christ ascended into heaven, He appointed His Apostles to take His place. When He called them away we can hardly imagine that He left his followers without an interpreter to expound His words. May we

not perhaps be blinded, like the disciples, by prejudice, ambition and worldly interests? And if so, what is more in keeping with our Lord's loving tenderness than that He should have left us also some one "to open to us the Scriptures" while we walk "in the way?"

PART II.

THE RIGHT OF INFALLIBILITY.

INFALLIBILITY TO BE PROVED.

THE question of infallibility is not one to be settled by sentiment. A certain feeling, however, arising from the study of Christ's goodness and mercy may afford us much help in searching for the truth. But the ultimate ground on which we admit infallibility must be reason. It is sometimes imagined that Catholics accept their Rule of Faith blindly. Nothing could be further from the fact. No one can absolutely give up his right to private judgment till he has become certain that the Church cannot err in interpreting the truths of revelation. It is to the means of acquiring this certainty that we now turn.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

Our first proof of infallibility is the sum of the proofs that discredit private judgment. Some Rule of Faith must of necessity exist,—a clear rule, a certain rule and one accessible to all. But the Bible as interpreted by private judgment meets none of these requirements; neither will any fallible authority avail. A fallible authority set up to interpret all the truths which God wishes us to believe, would be nothing more than a

collection of private judgments which might easily go astray on questions of the gravest importance. The Church of England is a fallible body that claims "authority in controversies of faith." (Art. 20.) Nevertheless, the religious beliefs of that Church are in a far more uncertain and fluctuating condition than are those of the Methodists or Mennonites. No! if we reject the claims of private judgment, and still must have a Rule of Faith, there is no way of escaping infallibility.

INFALLIBILITY NOT WITHDRAWN.

There once existed an infallible teaching body in the Church. Such a body is as essential to the welfare of the Church now as it was then. To maintain that the faithful of to-day have no need of an infallible authority to tell them who is right and who is wrong in the interpretation of God's word, may be flattering to our pride, but it is an insult to our experience. There might indeed be some shadow of reason in such a desperate claim if there were any sign that the Bible had been written to be the sole Rule of Faith for all peoples and all times. But there is no indication of any such purpose in the composition of Holy Scripture. On the contrary, some of the chief books of the New Testament, if not all, were written for people already instructed in the faith, and therefore fully acquainted with the essential doctrines of their religion. When we send a letter to friends, matters on which they are well informed are likely to be touched upon only incidentally or not at all. There is hardly the barest probability that we shall inform them who is President of the United

States. We are not likely to give them an outline of the Constitution, or of the laws of the State in which they live. All these things they know; and any one who would go to our letters for information on such topics would be regarded as in hard straits indeed. Such a person, however, would be acting much as Protestants do when they go to Holy Scripture for the discovery of all that they are to believe. If the books of the New Testament had been written for people not yet instructed in the faith and with a view to giving them their instruction completely through the medium of written correspondence, then Protestants might find some justification for their action. But the Christian religion was not spread by the nineteenth century system of "instruction-by-mail." It was taught *viva voce* and supplemented by letters in which matters of secondary moment are often developed more fully than the most important dogmas.

THE CHURCH'S OWN TESTIMONY.

Though there were no proof, either direct or indirect from Scripture, of the Church's infallibility, still the fact is of such a kind that the Church's own testimony thereto would be sufficient ground for our admitting it. If she was made infallible by her Divine Founder she must certainly have known of the dowry thus bestowed upon her; and if she testifies to it, her testimony, if not positively disproved, must be allowed to stand. We have to rely on her word for the authenticity of the books of the New Testament. If she is a faithful *historical* witness to the value of her books, why should

she not be a faithful historical witness to the value of her own testimony? As she teaches us through her early writers which books are to be admitted into the Canon of Scripture, and which are not, so she teaches us through the same men that infallibility is to be admitted as one of her prerogatives.

Against this proof it may be objected that we fall into the sophism of "begging the question:" we prove our Rule of Faith by itself. The objection might easily be retorted: How do Protestants prove, as it seems to them, their Rule of Faith? Do they not prove it by the Scripture as interpreted by private judgment? But this is precisely their Rule of Faith; therefore, they prove their Rule of Faith by itself. The direct answer, however, to the difficulty is this: If a well-known, reliable friend assures us of some fact relating to himself, we take his word as long as we have no reason for disbelieving him. If he assures us that he knows Greek thoroughly, and can translate without mistake any passage that we may select from the Greek authors, we willingly accept his testimony, and if needs be, make use of his knowledge. In like manner, when the Church tells us that she has received the gift of infallibility and can interpret aright for us all the truths of revelation, it is but reasonable to accept her word. We have no ground for doubting it. We cannot point to a single case in which she has ever deceived us. Facts, no doubt, are brought up against her, but they have to be distorted before they can convict her of error. The probabilities therefore are entirely in her favor, so her word is enough for a prudent man to admit her claims.

But when, it may be asked, did the Church ever declare that she was infallible? She has never considered it necessary to give any explicit definition on the question. But she can manifest her mind through other means besides definitions. She speaks through the universal preaching and teaching of her sons. She speaks through those holy Fathers who were thoroughly imbued with her spirit, and who were raised up by Almighty God to defend her against her adversaries and to make known her privileges. She spoke through men like Irenæus, Athanasius, Leo, Augustine, Gregory. We need appeal to no others, these few illustrious witnesses will speak for all. "Very blameless," says St. Irenæus, "and perfect did they [the Apostles] wish those to be whom they were leaving as *their successors* and to whom they were giving their own office of teaching." (Contra Hæres., III. 3.) And again: "Therefore we should hearken to those presbyters (bishops) who are in the Church and who have their succession, as has been seen, from the Apostles; who with the succession of the Episcopate have received, according to the good pleasure of the Father, *the sure gift of truth*." (Ibid., IV. 26.) According then to St. Irenæus, the Apostles transmitted their teaching office to the Church, and with it "the sure gift of truth." The same Saint says further on: "As for the heretics, offering as they do strange fire at the altar of God, that is, strange doctrines, they shall be burned up with fire from heaven as Nadab and Abiu." And still a little further: "Where the Lord's free gifts are set there we must learn the truth; *from those who have the Apostolic succe-*

sion, and a sound and irreproachable conversation, and unadulterated and incorruptible discourse. For they both guard that faith of ours, the object of which is one God, who made all things; and they increase that love which points to the Son of God who hath done so great works of providence for us; *and they expound to us the Scriptures without danger*, neither blaspheming God, nor dishonoring Patriarchs, nor despising Prophets." (l. c.)

If we consult St. Athanasius (A. D. 297-373) as to the Church's infallibility he tells us: "The Lord's word uttered by the general Council of Nicæa remains forever." (Ep. ad Afros, n. 2.)

St. Leo the Great (A. D. 390-461) writes: "Concerning the matters defined in the Councils of Nicæa and Chalcedon we dare not enter into any disquisition; as if the things which were settled through the Holy Ghost by so great authorities could be infirm or doubtful." (Ad. Leon. August., ep. 162.)

No less remarkable is the testimony of St. Augustine. The Church, he says, must ever remain pure in doctrine, for heresy always goes out from her. "She is the Holy Church, the One Church, the True Church, the Catholic Church; fighting against all heresies, she can be out-fought by none. All heresies have gone out from her as useless branches cut away from the vine: she remains in her root, in her vine, in her charity. The gates of hell cannot conquer her." (De Symb. Ser. ad. Catech., n. 14.)

And lastly, St. Gregory the Great (A. D. 540-604) declares: "Since 'with the heart we believe unto justice; but with the mouth, confession is made unto sal-

vation,' I confess that as I receive and venerate the four books of the holy Gospel, so I receive and venerate the four Councils." After enumerating the Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon, the Saint continues: "On these as on a four-cornered stone the structure of the faith arises, and whoever does not admit their solidity, no matter what his life or actions may be, though he may seem a stone, he lies outside the edifice." (Epistol. Lib., I., ep. 25.) These words indeed are striking. According to St. Peter (1 Pet. ii. 5) the church is a spiritual house and the faithful are the living stones out of which it is built. According to St. Gregory the man who does not admit the teaching of the Church through her Councils, may seem to be a stone, but he is a stone that lies outside the building.

ST. PAUL'S TESTIMONY.

From the Church's testimony given through her Saints and Doctors, we pass to the testimony given by St. Paul. We select a text that has been attacked from every possible direction by Protestant interpreters, but which is just as strong and as untouched to-day as it was when the Reformers first assailed it. "These things I write to thee hoping that I shall come to thee shortly. But if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 Tim. iii. 14-15.)

In order to evade the evidence of this text, Protestant expositors have exhausted all the resources of private judgment. Some tell us that the "pillar and ground

of truth" spoken of is Timothy; others say it is Christ Himself, and the words must be connected with the following verse; some claim that St. Paul is speaking only of "fundamental" truths; others that he is speaking of all revealed truth, but that his words refer to the Church only as it existed in his own time; and finally some admit that the Apostle is speaking of the Church universal, but not of any particular Church, such as that of the "Romanists."

It is a most significant fact that up to the time of the Reformation no one ever had recourse to any such subtleties in explaining this text. Bloomfield, a Protestant commentator, admits that the first of these interpretations was undoubtedly adopted "to rescue the passage from Romish perversions." The truth is, all of them were invented for the same purpose. It must be remarked, in the first place, that according to the obvious and natural construction of the words, it is the Church of the Living God that St. Paul calls the pillar and ground of truth, and not the young man Timothy, nor Christ of whom no mention has yet been made. Secondly, before the word, "truth," St. Paul did not insert the word, "fundamental." If private judgment allows us to take the liberty of inserting such a word, then we are not interpreting but interpolating Scripture. Lastly, the Apostle throws out no hint that he is speaking of the Church only as it existed then, and not of the Church as it would exist later on in Timothy's life. No! all these interpretations can be looked upon as nothing better than miserable subterfuges to evade the plain, obvious meaning of the words

of the Apostle: "The Church is the pillar and ground of truth." It makes little difference whether the text refers to the Church teaching or to the Church believing. The belief of the Church shall always agree with her teaching. The Church then is the pillar and base of truth: but if she were to teach heresy, she would no longer be the pillar and base of truth, but the pillar and base of error.

And now, we ask, what Church is this? Surely it is not an aggregation of Churches. To talk of the divided Churches of Christendom being the pillar and base of truth is to approach very close to a contradiction. Their very division proves them to be rather pillars and supports of error, and the theory of private judgment hardly allows them to be anything else. Moreover, St. Paul does not say the *Churches*, but the Church of Christ. Accordingly there is only one Church which is the pillar and ground of truth, and that is the Catholic Church, or the Church which, one and undivided, is diffused throughout the world. We leave it to our readers to determine which Church this is. We ask them but to remember the golden words of St. Augustine, *unitas diffusa*, "unity diffused." (*Contra Litt. Petil.* I. 18.) Before these two words, as before a two-edged sword, every sect must fall; if it is diffused, it is not one; if one, it is not diffused.¹

¹ The Protestant theory of a universal Church composed of all Christian Denominations is refuted by the same principle. Such a Church is not "unity diffused," but unity "destroyed."

THE DIVINE PROMISE.

In proving infallibility from Scripture, theologians employ several texts, some of which, we must admit, afford no more than probable conclusions. Such, we think,¹ are the texts (John xiv. 16, xvi. 12-13), in which our blessed Lord promises the Holy Ghost to His Apostles. As the words seem to refer to the Holy Spirit as the teacher of truth and the revealer of the future, they can hardly be extended on scriptural authority to post-apostolic times. It is quite interesting to see Chillingworth, the keenest of Protestant theologians, assailing the argument based on these passages. He attacks it with as much earnestness as if Catholics considered it the main support of infallibility. But as they do not, we may waive the value (independent of tradition) of the texts here referred to, and come to a text at once classical and conclusive.

“And Jesus, coming, spoke to them, saying: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth; going, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.)

In this passage there are two phrases on which attention should be fixed. The first is, “all days, even to the consummation of the world;” the other, “behold, I am with you.” The first phrase occurs four

¹ *Salvo meliori judicio.*

times in the New Testament. In the three passages outside the one just quoted, the phrase means, beyond all doubt, just what the words naturally signify, namely, the end of the world. Therefore, we conclude that the present passage obviously and naturally signifies that Christ will be with the Apostles in their teaching capacity as long as this world endures. He is sending them forth to preach the Gospel "to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). This is certainly a task they cannot accomplish in their own life-time. Hence, the commission given to teach, preach and baptize is given not only to the Apostles personally, but to the Apostles as continuing to live in their successors. But Christ is not with His Apostles to the end of the world in their teaching and baptizing capacity, excepting inasmuch as they have successors in whom they continue to live, teach and baptize. Without determining here who these successors are, one thing we must conclude, that Christ will be with them all days to the end of the world. It remains for us, then, to decide what this continual presence implies.

Dr. Murray in his admirable work *De Ecclesia*—the best undoubtedly ever written on the Church—gives ninety different passages from the Old Testament in which God promises "to be with," or is asked "to be with," a person in the performance of some work. From these passages it is made perfectly clear that the words: "I am with you," when spoken by Almighty God, contain a promise of His *special* assistance which will bring the work enjoined to a happy issue. This therefore being the exact meaning of the phrase, it

follows that when Christ promises "to be with" His Apostles and their successors in the office of teaching all nations, His promise can mean nothing else than that He will give them special assistance and bring their teaching to a happy issue. But if their teaching is to have such an issue, it cannot propagate heresy, it cannot put a false meaning on the word of God, it cannot lead men into denying what God has said. The day on which the Church teaches heresy, Christ is not with her; yet He promised to be with her "all days" even to the consummation of the world.

But it is said, all things are governed by evolution, and when we consider the history of ancient religions we have reason to ask, what will be the teaching of the Church four thousand years from now? It is not unreasonable to suppose that the same question was asked nearly two thousand years ago by Marcion and Valentinus. But Marcion and Valentinus have disappeared, except from the history of self-deluded men, and the Church goes on preaching the same doctrine that she preached in their days. Does not this fact seem to indicate that what she is now, she will be when two thousand years more shall have elapsed, and her impugnors of to-day will be considered then, what Marcion and Valentinus are considered now? Evolution changes religions which are controlled by private judgment and fallible authority, but not a religion directed by the presence of Him who said: "I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."²

¹*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1900.

² Macaulay's famous essay on Ranke's History of the Popes needs

DEVELOPMENT.

When we claim that the faith of the Church does not change, we are far from denying that the *formulæ* in which her faith is expressed may undergo modifications. Changes in human knowledge involve modifications and changes in human language. Besides, exceptions and limitations which at one time are omitted from a general proposition, although known and believed as well as the proposition itself, may afterwards be explicitly inserted as a part of the proposition, in order to avoid misunderstandings. Thus, "There is no salvation outside the Church," is a general proposition to which belongs a limitation that was known and believed from the beginning as well as the proposition itself. To explicitly insert this limitation involves no change of faith.

There is also another form of development that takes place in the Church's belief. Revealed truths may become more clearly and more *universally* understood. A truth revealed in the beginning and explicitly known

here only a passing allusion. In it may be seen what the great essayist thought about evolution in Catholicism. The essay may be read as a good commentary on a noble Horatian stanza as applied to the Church :

*Duris ut illex tonsa bipennibus
Nigrae feracis frondis in Algido,
Per damna, per caedes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro.*

"Even as the ilex, lopped by axes rude,
Where, rich with dusky boughs, soars Algidus,
Through loss, through wounds, receives
New gain, new life—yea from the very steel."—Lord Lytton.

and believed only by some, may, in process of time, come to be known and believed by all.¹ Neither does this involve any change in the Church's faith. As long as she does not change her mind about a truth which she has once taught and believed as *divinely revealed*, and as long as she does not propose a truth as divinely revealed which may afterwards turn out not to be such, her faith is the same, and she is Apostolic in doctrine as well as in succession.

THE APOSTLESHIP NOT PERPETUATED.

Dr. Hodge tells us that "Romanists falsely assume the perpetuity of the Apostleship." He then enumerates all the gifts, qualifications and credentials of the "original Apostles." The apostleship, he says, was limited to men who had been witnesses of the resurrection, and who had received the gift of inspiration and the power of working miracles. He then adds: "Modern prelates do not pretend to possess any of those gifts . . . they claim no immediate commission, no independent knowledge derived from immediate revelation, no personal infallibility, no vision of Christ, and no gift of miracles. That is, they claim the authority of the office, but not its reality. It is very plain, therefore, that they are not Apostles. They cannot have the authority of the office without having the gifts on which that authority was founded. . . . If then the apostleship, from its nature and design was

¹ Lugo De Fide, Disp. III. sec. 5.

incapable of transmission; if there be this decisive evidence from Scripture and history that it has not been perpetuated, then the whole theory of the Romanists falls to the ground." (Vol. I. c. 6.)

Dr. Hodge's long argument against the perpetuity of the apostleship is an excellent example of *ignoratio elenchi*. The contention of "Romanists" is that the teaching office of the Apostles, not the Apostleship, was transmitted. As Dr. Hodge shows, the Apostleship included many gifts and privileges. Among them was corporate infallibility, and this, we claim, could be, and was, transmitted. Because the special privileges conferred on the Apostles for the founding and organizing of the Church came to an end, it does not follow that the office of teaching without error also ceased. As the office of ruling with authority remained, so also did the office of teaching with infallibility. When a man dies, his son may succeed him in one or two things without succeeding him in everything. The father may have been a publisher, an author, a critic, a member perhaps of some literary club, or of a diplomatic commission. The son need not succeed him in all these offices; if he succeeds him in the publishing business, he is rightfully, though in a limited sense, called his father's successor; and only in a limited sense of this kind are Bishops called the successors of the Apostles.

INFALLIBILITY AND UNITY.

If there is one thing clear from the writings of St. Paul, it is the Unity of the Church. Time and again he insists on telling the faithful that they are "one

body," "members of one body," "members one of another." Nor are the faithful, according to the Apostle, united into one body by merely having Christ for their head. There is an *internal* bond uniting them; they are not only members of Christ's body, they are "members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5). What is this internal bond making them "members one of another"? It is a faith which is one, as Christ is one and God the Father is one. (Eph. iv. 5-6.) Moreover, it is a faith uniting them so perfectly in mind, that it is held up as a most powerful reason why they should be united in heart, and "support one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. iv. 2-3.) Lastly, it is a unity of faith into which all men may come so as not to be any longer "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine." (Eph. iv. 14.)

Now, we ask, without an infallible authority, how can there be any unity of faith making the faithful "members one of another?" For four or five so-called "fundamental" doctrines that are supposed to unite all the churches, there is twice the number keeping them apart. If unity of faith consists in agreeing on a few articles of religion and in quarreling about all the others, without any means of settling the dispute, St. Paul's argument for unity of hearts becomes utterly meaningless. Suppose the Archbishop of Canterbury should address an encyclical to all the members of the Anglican Church and say: "As you are all one in faith, so you should be all one in charity." Or suppose Bishop Potter of New York should take it into his head

to write a letter to the various religious denominations of the United States, including, of course, Catholics, and say to them: "My brethren, be one in charity, as you are all one in faith." The Bishop would be considered either as insane or as guilty of a wicked piece of sarcasm.

Again, the unity of faith into which all are to come, is a unity in which they shall be no more "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine." (Eph. iv. 14.) But without an infallible guide, men who think on the problems of religion can never cease to be tossed to and fro. Like the "conflicting" winds that are said to rush forth from the cave of Æolus when the storm-cloud gathers, so conflicting doctrines are constantly issuing from every source of human thought. Not to be carried about by them is beyond the strength of man's unaided intellect. Still, if we read St. Paul aright, Christ has given men a means whereby they may no longer be "carried about by every wind of doctrine." Such means can be none other than the infallibility of Christ's Church.

A SUBTERFUGE.

Protestants commonly admit that the Church founded by Christ must be always one in faith. But the argument thence derived for the Church's infallibility is evaded by the claim that the only unity of faith required by Christ is unity in believing the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. In this way, unity of faith, it is asserted, exists between all the separated Christian Churches, and it can continue to exist with-

out any infallible guide. Now the Protestant distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals is a mere subterfuge. Firstly, it finds no warrant in Scripture, and hence Protestants are guilty of inconsistency in making it one of the essential points of their creed. Secondly, as no one has ever been able to point out what are these fundamental doctrines, a belief in which is essential for Christian unity, it follows that no one can say with certainty what Christian unity consists in. Here, then, we have unity — one of the immemorial characters of the Church — which no longer makes the Church known, for no one can say what unity itself is.

A passage from Palmer's anti-Catholic treatise on the Church will show what some enlightened Protestants have thought on this question of fundamentals. Palmer says: "The term fundamental is actually used in the greatest variety of meanings by different writers of eminence, and even by the same writers." Then after showing how both Chillingworth and Laud use the word in different senses, he continues: "Waterland observes, with perfect truth, that there are 'almost as many rules for determining fundamentals as there are different sects or parties,' and thus 'that which might otherwise serve (if all men were reasonable) to end all differences, has itself been too often made one principal bone of contention.'" Quoting from Waterland, Palmer gives various rules from various leaders of thought for determining fundamentals, and then he adds: "As it might be conjectured from the infinite variety and contradiction of the above definitions and rules, there is the greatest difficulty and uncertainty as to what doc-

trines are fundamental. Chillingworth declares that the variety of the circumstances of different men, 'makes it impossible to set down an exact catalogue of fundamentals,' and he is obliged to propose as the only security against fundamental error, the belief that Scripture is true, and that it contains all things necessary to salvation; and the endeavor to find and believe the true sense of it." (Palmer, Vol. I, c. 5, app.)

Now, neither Chillingworth nor Palmer has told us how a belief "that Scripture is true," and that "it contains all things necessary for salvation," together with "an endeavor to find and believe the true sense of it" is going to guard a man from "fundamental error." Neither do they tell us how men who follow this advice are certain to preserve the unity of the faith. We should like to know which one of the three conditions laid down by Chillingworth was omitted by the heretics of the early centuries, who, nevertheless, according to the *universal belief* of the Church of those times, violated Christian unity. In fact, a violation of Christian unity is impossible if there is a distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, and each one is allowed to place it where he thinks fit.

If Chillingworth were writing to-day, he would have to amend his teaching. Among his fundamentals is the truth of Holy Scripture. To-day this article would have to be erased in order to make room in the Christian Church for Dr. Briggs, Dr. McGiffert, and a host of others.

This distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, *without any one to settle what the fundamentals*

are, is an utter delusion. It sounds well, misleads the ignorant and explains nothing. The union that exists among members of various philosophical schools is not a type of that which must exist among members of the Church of Christ. Still, philosophers agree in admitting certain principles that may rightly be called "fundamental;" such, for example, are the principles immediately evident to reason. But as long as they differ on nearly every other question of importance, diversity, not unity, is their characteristic note. "The devil," says St. Augustine, "seeing the temples of the demons deserted, and the human race running to the name of the liberating Mediator, has moved heretics, under cover of the Christian name, to resist Christian doctrine, as if they could be kept in the City of God indifferently without any correction, just as the City of Confusion indifferently held the philosophers who were of diverse and adverse opinions." (De Civ. Dei., xviii. 51.)

ANOTHER OBJECTION.

Before passing to our next argument, it may be well to consider two objections frequently urged against our right to prove infallibility from Scripture. It is said that in attempting such a proof we employ the very Rule of Faith which all along we have been condemning. It is moreover urged that we are guilty of arguing in "a vicious circle."

To the first objection we reply that when we deny the fitness of Holy Scripture as interpreted by private judgment to be a Rule of Faith, we do not deny that

Holy Scripture can be rightly interpreted by private judgment in some particular cases and by some particular persons. What we deny is, that the important doctrinal texts of Holy Scripture can be rightly interpreted by the private judgment of all persons. When we assert that Holy Scripture is obscure, we do not mean that every text is obscure. Nor when we claim that a very large number of doctrinal texts is obscure, do we assert them to be so unintelligible that no amount of scholarship can make out their meaning. A close study of the context, a knowledge of parallel passages, acquaintance with the Greek and Hebrew equivalents, a faithful application of the laws of hermeneutics, in a word, all the means that scholars have at hand, may suffice for arriving at the true interpretation of the text. But as these means are available only for scholars, and as scholars themselves disagree on such a vast number of important doctrinal texts, we claim that the Scripture as a norm of what to believe, is obscure, for at least the generality of mankind. No amount of assertion or protestation can convince a practical man of the contrary. If in one of our large railroad stations a notice were posted up telling travelers what train to take in order to reach a certain city, and a large number of passengers, after reading the notice, were to get on the wrong train; and this were to happen day after day, week after week; no amount of argumentation on the part of the railroad officials would prove that the notice was sufficiently clear for all. This is precisely what happens in regard to Holy Scripture. Important doctrinal texts may be clear for a few, but they are cer-

tainly obscure for many, and put many on the wrong train. And if we may be allowed to follow up the metaphor, what railroad company would so trust its sign-boards and printed schedules as to leave its stations without a living voice to direct travelers to the right train? And still when there is question of reaching the City of God, we must trust, according to Protestants, to the printed schedule and our own interpretation of it.

As to the texts we have taken from Holy Scripture to prove infallibility, whether they be clear or not for the general reader, we claim that sound scholarship can put on them no other interpretation than the one we have given. If in this matter we are following private judgment, we are doing so legitimately, for we are only determining the credentials of our teacher. At all events, we are only using against our opponents the arms which they themselves employ.

ARGUING IN A CIRCLE.

It is often said: "Catholics prove the Church's authority from the Bible, and the Bible's authority from the Church's." If this assertion were true without a distinction, Catholics would certainly be guilty of arguing in a circle. But there is need of a distinction, and for the sake of clearness it may be expressed in the following propositions:

1. The authenticity of the *chief* books of the New Testament is proved from the *historical* testimony of the Fathers of the early Church.

2. From the chief books of the New Testament as

from authentic historical records (not yet considered as inspired) we take *some* of our proofs for the infallibility of the Church.

3. When infallibility has been proved, we employ the Church's infallible authority to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the authenticity of the few books which before were doubtful.

4. In proving against Protestants the infallibility of the Church, we employ Scripture as an inspired document, seeing that our adversaries admit it to be such.

Surely, there is no vicious circle in this series of propositions.

Another charge of arguing in a circle is sometimes brought against Catholics on the ground that they prove the visibility of the Church from her infallibility, and when they prove her infallibility they take her visibility for granted. In a recent book by a Protestant Theologian¹ this accusation finds place among numerous others equally misleading. He writes: "Thus authority in matters of faith, the unbroken continuity of the Church, and its identity with the Roman Church and its hierarchy, must all be proved before it is evident that the visible Church is identical, without qualification, with the Church that Christ founded. While, therefore, the Roman system demands the identification of the Church with the visible Church, which is its first and fundamental error in the opinion of Protestants, in order to maintain its further doctrines of the authority

¹The Fundamental Ideas of the Roman Catholic Church, by Frank Hugh Foster, Ph. D., D. D. Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, 1899.

of the Church, etc., it cannot prove this ultimate position without employing the subsequent doctrines which are built upon it as elements of the proof. The proof thus fails at the outset, for this is reasoning in a circle" (p. 8).

Now, Professor Foster admits on the very page from which we take this quotation that "Christ established a visible Church upon earth." But he immediately adds that "the identification of the Church with the visible Church" is a fundamental error of the Roman system. Really, what does the Professor mean? Does he mean that "Christ established a visible Church" which is not the Church? Does he take for granted that Christ established two Churches, viz., a Church, and a visible Church? The Scripture tells us of only one Church established by our Divine Lord. The Apostles in their epistles know of only one Church. The two-Church theory has not a particle of evidence in its support. But according to Professor Foster, Christ founded a visible Church. Therefore, the Church, the only Church, the true Church is a visible one, and the fundamental error of the Roman system dates from the time when Christ said to Peter: "On this rock I will build my Church." Remark, Christ did not say, "my Churches," but "my Church."

Now, with regard to the Catholic method of arguing in a circle, the difficulty vanishes as soon as we explain what arguing in a circle is not. If we prove proposition A by propositions D, P, M, R, as by so many distinct proofs, we can afterward, without arguing in a circle, prove proposition R by proposition A, because

this latter has been proved by propositions distinct from R. If the proof of A had been entirely based on R, then indeed we should be guilty of a vicious circle in proving R by A. In proving the visibility of the Church, Catholic Theologians use several proofs, some of which entirely prescind from infallibility and authority in matters of faith. When they come to prove infallibility they also employ arguments, though not obliged to do so, that entirely prescind from the question of visibility. The method of arguing, therefore, against which our adversaries object is not a vicious circle, but it is a good illustration of how the great dogmas of religion are so intimately connected that almost any one of them when closely analyzed is found to involve the others. Herein is a striking proof of the truth of a system. Its doctrines are all in perfect harmony with one another; if one of them be disturbed all are disturbed; if one be proved to exist, the existence of the others may be surmised even before direct proof of their existence can be given.

A HOUSE BUILT ON ROCK.

We now pass to some arguments for infallibility which, though perhaps not absolute in their nature, still throw light on what has been already advanced. Infallibility is a natural concomitant of the four following facts: The Church of Christ (1) is a house built on rock; (2) it is a place of obedience; (3) a place of peace; (4) it is a house of light.

The Church is a house against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail." Now, "the gates of hell" is a

phrase that, no matter what else it may signify, certainly signifies "the power of the kingdom of death." Therefore, death, destruction, ruin can never prevail against the Church. Every other house may fall, that House must stand. But if the Church is not infallible, it too must fall. Why? Because if not infallible it must become divided, and "every house divided against itself shall not stand." (Matt. xii. 25.)

Again, if the Church is not infallible, how can it stand when the rains fall and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon it? (Matt. vii. 25.) It is, no doubt, founded upon a rock. But does not this very fact imply that there is a principle of strength intrinsic to the Church and enabling it to resist the onset of every storm? A frail house built on a rock is no more proof against the storm than a solid house built on sand. So when Christ tells us that His House is built on rock, He implies that the House itself is a solid structure against which no storm can prevail. But without infallibility His Church is not solid; the forces of error must prevail against it as they did against the supernatural religion which God gave the human race at the beginning. "I know," says Cardinal Newman in his *Apologia*, (c. 5) "that even the unaided reason when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in a future retribution; but I am considering the faculty of reason actually and historically; and in this point of view I do not think I am wrong in saying that its tendency is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion. No truth, however sacred, can stand against it in the long run; and

hence it is that in the pagan world, when our Lord came, the last traces of the religious knowledge of former times were all but disappearing from those portions of the world in which the intellect had been active and had had a career." From this, Newman goes on to speak of infallibility as a means of safe-guarding the truths of even natural religion. He sees in it "a provision adapted by the mercy of the Creator to preserve religion in the world" and to restrain freedom of thought, and "to rescue it from its own suicidal excesses."

PETRIFICATION.

The charge is made against infallibility that it "petrifies" the Church. The charge is true, and Catholics proudly admit it. The Church was built upon a rock, as we have said, and while all things around it change, it changes not. Nay more, "It beholds," says St. Ambrose,¹ the shipwreck of all things else, itself free and secure from danger." Its faith is to-day what it was nineteen centuries ago, and it is precisely infallibility that has kept it so. To call the Catholic Church "the Church of the petrification"² may be a doubtful attempt at wit, but it is a sure expression of truth. By giving the Church such a name the writer in the *Nineteenth Century* for March showed how little he thought of his argument in the *Nineteenth Century* for January. In the January issue of that magazine he had tried to prove that the faith of the Church was changing.

¹ De Abrahamo, II. 3.

² *The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1900, p. 441.

A HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE.

One virtue which we should naturally expect to find holding a prominent place in Christ's Church is the virtue of obedience. The very sin that brought about the coming of our Saviour was disobedience; a sin—let it be noted—that arose from a desire of wider knowledge. To inculcate the necessity of simple, child-like obedience the Saviour of the world spent eighteen years of His life in Nazareth. "He was subject to them;" this is the history of those eighteen long years. Such strange conduct as this would lead us to expect that obedience to authority was to be a distinctive mark of His Kingdom. After entering on His public life, speaking of him who offends his brother, He said: "If he will not hear the Church let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) And when sending forth His Disciples to preach the Gospel He told them: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me." (Luke x. 16.) It is reasonable to suppose that these words were spoken for all time, and that whenever we are offended by scandalous teachers, we have a right to denounce them to the Church, and treat them as heathens and publicans if they refuse to hear her voice. Moreover, the children of the Church in hearing her, hear Christ; in despising her, they despise Him. Here then is an obedience the most absolute, imposed by the Lord Himself. Can we suppose that He enjoined such absolute obedience on the scholars if He did not bestow infallibility on the teachers? We do not claim that each individual

teacher should be infallible, but we do claim that when such absolute obedience is imposed, the teachers, as a body, should possess infallibility, and each teacher be easily known to agree with the body, or easily checked if he disagrees.

As an infallible body and its teachers have the power to command obedience, so they also have the power to command reverence. Now, reverence, as the prince of poets has said, is the "angel of the world;"¹ and whatever preserves it amongst men has a claim on the world's acceptance. But nothing can produce or preserve it better than a religious teacher incapable of error. Nothing, on the other hand, creates irreverence more effectually than a religious teacher who goes on erring day after day. For this reason we believe that the right of private judgment is naturally calculated to beget irreverence; and irreverence begets skeptics, atheists and scoffers.

SUBMISSION OF INTELLECT.

But it is precisely for the submission of our intellects to a created and limited authority that our adversaries upbraid us most. They imagine that by such submission we barter away our birth-right of intellectual beings. But the difficulty is a mere fiction of the imagination. To complain about the restraint put upon the intellect by infallibility—when once infallibility has been proved—is as unreasonable as to complain that our intellectual liberty is restrained by the propositions of geometry or the laws of gravitation. The dis-

¹ *Cymbeline*, iv. 2.

covery of new truths always puts restraint upon the intellect, but it is only a restraint that guards that faculty against future error. As for religious truths not yet propounded by the Church, Catholics may investigate them as freely as they please, provided they do so with the light of infallibility at their side. Surely no one will say that undue restraint is put upon a man who enters a cave to explore it, but must do so in the company of a guide bearing a light. No one complains that injustice is done to the mariner because he is obliged to sail with compass and chart. Now, what the light is to the explorer of the cave, what compass and chart are to the explorer of the sea, infallibility is to the sons of the Church when exploring religious truth, or truth that borders on religion.

To assert that it is too much to demand from men submission of their intellects to created authority is to complain against Him who made that authority infallible. Besides, a law demanding intellectual submission is rather in keeping with the divine origin of the Church, and with the majesty of her mission. "We may observe," says Ruskin, "that exactly in proportion to the majesty of things in the scale of being, is the completeness of their obedience to the laws that are set over them. Gravitation is less quietly, less instantly obeyed by a grain of dust than it is by the sun and moon; and the ocean falls and flows under influences which the lake and river do not recognize. So also, in estimating the dignity of any action or occupation of men, there is perhaps no better test than the question, 'are its laws strait?' For their severity will probably

be commensurate with the greatness of the numbers whose labor it concentrates or whose interest it concerns." (The Seven Lamps of Architecture.)

AN ADVERSARY'S ARGUMENT.

It is quite amazing to find Dr. Hodge putting down the following statement as his chief argument for the right of private judgment and the rejection of infallibility: "The obligations to faith and obedience are personal. Every man is responsible for his religious faith and his moral conduct. He can not transfer that responsibility to others; nor can others assume it in his stead. He must answer for himself; and if he must answer for himself, he must judge for himself. It will not avail him in the day of judgment to say that his parents or his church taught him wrong. He should have listened to God and obeyed Him rather than man." (Dogm. Theol., Vol. I., c. 6.)

We could imagine these words as coming very naturally from the lips of some precocious and disobedient child who wanted to have his own way in everything. But it is hard to understand how a grave theologian could have written them, completely forgetting the words of our Lord: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me," and "if he will not hear the Church let him be unto thee as a heathen and publican," and then the words of St. Paul: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls." (Heb. xiii. 17.)

Those to whom St. Paul wrote had certainly "to

answer" for themselves. Had they on that account a right to "judge" for themselves as to whether his words were true or false? If he made a clear statement they had to accept it as true; nor did their acceptance prevent their faith and obedience from being "personal." In like manner, if the Church be the teacher appointed for us by Almighty God, our faith and our obedience remain personal, and we shall be obliged to answer for ourselves just as those who received their faith from St. Paul or from Christ Himself.

Again, if the Church has been appointed to be our teacher, we shall certainly be asked on the day of judgment whether we have listened to her voice or not; and if it turns out that we have not listened, we shall receive a sentence more terrible than that of the Cities of the Plain. "Whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words: going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that city." (Matt. x. 14-15.)

None the less, we believe, notwithstanding Dr. Hodge's declaration to the contrary, that on the last day many will be saved because their parents and their Church had taught them wrong. St. Paul had been taught the Scriptures wrong, but he obtained mercy of God, because he had acted "ignorantly and in unbelief." (1 Tim. i. 13.) And we hope, too, and pray that those (and they are many) who have been misguided by the teaching of Dr. Hodge will also find mercy at the hands of the Lord.

A KINGDOM OF PEACE.

There can be no doubt whatever that the Kingdom of Christ is foretold in the Scriptures as a Kingdom of Peace. "In His days," says the Psalmist, "shall justice spring up and abundance of peace till the moon be taken away." (Ps. lxxi. 7). And Isaias: "My people shall sit in the beauty of peace and in the tabernacles of confidence and in wealthy rest." (Is. xxxii. 18). And when the Kingdom of Peace had come, and "the Prince of Peace" Himself sent forth His disciples to preach His Gospel, He said to them: "Into whatsoever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house;' and if the son of peace be there your peace shall rest upon him, if not it shall return to you." (Luke x. 5-6.) The Apostle tells the Romans that the Kingdom of God "is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) He writes to the Ephesians bidding them stand, "having their loins girt about with truth," and their "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." (Eph. vi. 14-15.)

If the Kingdom of Christ is a Kingdom of peace, there must be peace in it for the mind. It would be an unwarranted limitation of the glorious promises of Holy Scripture to interpret them solely of the peace that accompanies freedom from sin. If the Gospel does not bring tranquility for the mind it is not a Gospel of peace. On the other hand, if instead of tranquility it brings worry and anxiety; if it constantly perplexes the mind by the darkness and mystery of the messages it contains — messages concerning our eternal welfare — and there be no means granted us for inter-

preting them with security, then the Gospel is not that Gospel of peace which the Scriptures represent, nor is the Kingdom of Christ that Kingdom of peace which the Prophets foretold. But once we admit the infallibility of Christ's Church the difficulty vanishes. She is His Kingdom; she holds His Gospel and can explain its messages. To her we can have recourse for the solution of our perplexities and doubts. She will decide for us those great questions that harass the human mind; and with her infallible teaching before us, we can "sit in the beauty of peace and in the tabernacles of confidence," and in a wealth of rest.

A NEW CHARGE AGAINST THE CHURCH.

But here arises a new charge. Does the Church really solve our difficulties? It has been objected, and not very long ago, that she does not. We are told that not a few earnest Catholic men and women "are crying out piteously to their ecclesiastical mother to be fed with the bread of wholesome doctrine as to scriptural truth. They might as well address a dumb idol, for no clear and decisive response will they obtain." (*Nineteenth Century*, March, 1900.) We should indeed feel sympathy for the men and women who are thus crying out for the bread of scriptural truth, did not the writer of the article immediately tell us the kind of bread for which they are crying. He says: "As to matters quite unpractical, the belief to be entertained by the faithful will be unequivocally declared, but not as to what men must, or must not, hold as to the animals which entered and left the ark, the history of Babel or

that of Habacuc, etc." (l. c. p. 438.) So then the bread that these men and women are piteously crying for is infallible definitions about (1) the animals that entered the ark; (2) the alteration of tongues at Babel; (3) the flying of Habacuc through the air; (4) the whale that swallowed Jonas; (5) the animal that spoke to Balaam. Now, we think that piteous crying for definitions on such (practical?) questions is, to say the least, unreasonable. It is hard to see why an Ecumenical Council should be summoned, or why the Pope in his advanced years should issue a Bull, to define such matters for a little band of men, and perhaps women, who impugn the decrees of the Vatican Council, and revile the Pope for his Encyclical on the Bible. Besides, the Church cannot turn out infallible definitions day by day to satisfy biologists, astronomers or even biblical students. The good of the general body of the faithful has first to be provided for; specialists may be sure that they too will receive attention in due time. In the meanwhile they should abide in peace and patience, and by their submission to the decisions already given, show that they are sincere when they ask for new ones. In the very days of St. Peter and St. Paul, the Gentile converts had to endure no little trouble; but they waited in patience, and at length all was settled.

The author of the article in the *Nineteenth Century* again says: "The parade of trustworthy authority and infallible guidance is but a solemn sham, as is the profession of tender consideration for the souls of her children. Her action is that of one who has no real belief,

no zeal for her dogmata, or care for children crying out to her in their distress. She gives stammering, equivocal replies." (l. c. p. 438.) This statement need not detain us long. It is refuted in the very article from which it is taken. Its author, referring to two papers he had written some time previously, says: "I made my articles as startling as I could in other respects, so as to compel attention to them and elicit if possible an unequivocal pronouncement, in which I thoroughly succeeded." (l. c. p. 430.) The same writer quotes the decree of the Vatican Council concerning the inspiration of Scripture and calls it "abundantly decisive and categorical." (l. c. p. 433.) He then gives the crucial passage from the Encyclical of Leo XIII., on the same subject of biblical inspiration, and says: "Could words be more dogmatic, categorical and unequivocal?" (l. c. p. 435.) There is little use in refuting writers who refute themselves.

St. Cyprian says: "In the house of God, in the Church of Christ, men dwell with one mind, in concord and singleness enduring. For this cause the Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove; a simple and pleasant creature, with no bitterness of gall, no fierceness of bite, no violence of rending talons." And then speaking of those who violate the peace of the Church, the holy martyr says: "We must be thankful when such men become separate from the Church, that so their fierce and poisoned contagion may not cause a havoc among the doves and sheep of Christ; there cannot be fellowship and union of bitter with sweet, darkness with light, foul weather with fair, war with peace. . . .

“Those [who leave the Church] the Apostle John curses and smites, saying: ‘They went forth from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, surely they would have remained with us.’ Thus is it that heresies often have been caused and still continue; while the perverted mind is estranged from peace, and unity is lost amongst faithless discord. Nevertheless the Lord permits and suffers those things to be, preserving the power of choice to individual free will, in order that while the discrimination of truth is a test of our hearts and minds, the perfect faith of them that are approved may shine forth in the manifest light. The Holy Ghost admonishes us by the Apostle and says: ‘It is needful also that heresies should be, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you.’ Thus are the faithful approved, thus the false detected; thus even here before the day of judgment, the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are divided, *the chaff separated from the wheat.*” (De Unit. Eccles. c. 8, 9.)

We quote these words not in triumph, but in sadness. That any one should become separated from the Church, though it may be for us a cause of gratitude, cannot but be a source of sorrow. The words of St. Cyprian remind us also how good men may have their troubles in the Church, and still be loyal to it and find it to be the house of peace and the home of light. Troubles, no doubt, easily arise from a pride that dies hard, from a desire “to be more wise than it behooveth” (Rom. xii. 3), from an imprudent zeal, or perhaps from a zeal looked upon as imprudent. But these troubles should not obscure the fact that it is on the

Church the Dove of peace has rested, and that it is to her the light has been given. St. Cyprian had many troubles arising from a controversy with his ecclesiastical superior, and still for him the Church was a place "not of storm but of calm," "not of darkness but of light." He tells us that Satan "snatches men from out the Church itself, and while they think themselves come to the light and escaped from the night of the world, he secretly gathers fresh shadows upon them; so that standing neither with the Gospel of Christ, nor with His ordinances, nor with His law, they yet call themselves Christians, walking among darkness and thinking that they have the light." (1. c., c. 2.)

A PLACE OF LIGHT.

That outside the Church is darkness, and within unfailing light, seems to be an idea impressed on the Christian mind from the beginning. It was to the Church that the Fathers always applied the words of Isaias: "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. (Is. lx. 2-3.)

That the Church was a place of light was no less clearly stated by St. Peter when he told the early Christians that they should give praise to God who had called them out of darkness "into His marvelous light." (1. Pet. ii. 9.) Remark, it was no ordinary light, it was marvelous light into which they had been called. St. Irenæus sets forth the same truth in terms

no less significant. He writes: "And as for the Church, her *preaching* is *true* and stable, and in her through the whole world one and the same salvation is declared. *For to her is entrusted the light of God*, and therefore, the wisdom of God, whereby He saveth all men, 'is sung in the place of going forth, and in the streets dealeth fearlessly, is preached on the top of the walls, and speaketh boldly in the gates of the city.' For the Church everywhere *preaches the truth*; and this is the lamp with the seven wicks bearing the light of Christ." (Adv. Hæres. v. 20.)

St. Gregory the Great tells us that the Church is "the place of those who see"—*locus videntium*; and he compares it to the spot where Moses was bid to stand that he might behold the passing of the glory of the Lord. (Mor. Lib. xxv. 10.)

If we turn to the Saints of the Orient we find that the Church's light is to them a source of inspiration. And what is noteworthy, they do not separate the light of the Church and the rock on which the Church was built. St. Ephræm (A. D. 308–373) thus speaks :

"Behold ! the Church dwells in the Chamber of Light ;
And see, at her door, in abjection profound,
Lies 'the one¹ put away.'

Sadly she [the rejected one] gazes
On the King's Daughter
Whose Chamber is guarded by Peter.
Where the shadow of Peter falls,
It raises the fallen.

¹ The Synagogue.

The spiritual Keys are Peter's heavenly treasure,
The two Testaments his possession."¹

Another poet and Saint of the Syriac Church, St. James of Sarug (A. D. 520), has developed still more fully how the Church built on Peter is the center and source of light.

"Thou art Kipho;² down in the foundations of the great House
I will set thee : upon thee I will build my Elected Church.
The wholeness of thy frame shall bear her weight : she will not sink.
I will place thee first in my building, thou being hardy.
Be thou the basis to the Holy Temple which I am to inhabit.
On thee I will expand all the superstructures of the Daughter-of-Day.
The great Apostle was the Foundation of the great House,
Which the Bride was to enter as a stronghold undefiled.
Christ raised her a Chamber and, lest she might be affrighted,
warranted her
That miscreants should never prevail against her surety.
He began to build her, and upon the great stone He had found,
Set her building, whose height was to transcend the clouds.
Two-and-ten stones He had laid in the Palace-of-Light.
But one was singled out to support the great building.
He dressed, marked and carved the great stone He had found,
And set it deep in the great building He was raising."³

In another poem the same Saint represents the Heavenly Father as addressing St. Peter and saying:

"Do thou first cull the spices, thou who art true ;
To thee I entrust the Chamber of the Daughter-of-Day."⁴

¹ Ephr. Hym. et Serm. Lamy. Vol. 3, p. 962.

² Literally—Peter, that is Rock.

³ Tradition of the Syriac Church of Antioch. By C. B. Benni. Trans. by J. Gagliardi.

⁴ The most beautiful of Oriental metaphors for the Church.

When the Prophet would describe the surpassing beauty of the future queen, Cleopatra, he called her "the daughter of women." (Dan. xi. 17.) When the Syrian Saint would portray not only the beauty but the brightness of the Church of Christ, he called her "The Daughter-of-Day." Then, again, she is "the Palace-of-Light;" she is "the place of those who see;" she is "the Lamp that bears the light of Christ;" she is "His marvelous light;" and "the Gentiles shall walk in her light, and kings in the brightness of her rising."

These citations but echo the universal voice of Christendom from the time that the Church was built on Peter to the time of the Reformation. And with this universal voice we cannot reconcile the idea that the Church can shed no light on the greatest truths of revelation. If she cannot enlighten us as to the divinity of Christ, as to His presence in the Eucharist, as to the faith needed to be saved, as to the inspiration of Holy Writ, as to the necessity of a new birth by Baptism—then to her is not "entrusted the light of God;" her "marvelous light" has failed. But He whose word fails not, promised to be with her "all days even to the consummation of the world;" and as long as He abides with her, her light cannot fail.

CONCLUSION.

To the Church that possesses infallibility, all the other prerogatives of Christ's Church rightfully and exclusively belong. The Church that is infallible is the Church that is also One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Churches that cannot claim infallibility—and what

Protestant Church or Churches dare claim it?—are not a part of the Catholic and Apostolic Church; they lie outside it, they are cut away from it; and we can only say to them what the Catholics of St. Augustine's time said to the Donatists in a rhythm composed by the Saint:

“ *Come, brethren, if you wish to be engrafted in the vine.*

We grieve to see you lying thus cut off.

Number our Bishops from the very See of Peter,

And in that line of Fathers see each one's succession;

That is the Rock 'gainst which the haughty gates of hell do not prevail.”

Venite, fratres, si vultis ut inseramini in vite.

Dolor est cum vos videmus praeisos ita jacere.

Numerate Sacerdotes vel ab ipsa Petri Sede,

Et in ordine illo Patrum quis cui successit, videte.

Ipsa est Petra quam non vincunt superbae inferorum portae.¹

—¹ Psalmus contra Partem Donati, Migne 43: 30.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF SAINT AUGUSTINE TO
HIS COUSIN¹ SEVERINUS, A MEMBER OF THE
DONATIST CHURCH.

“Augustine to his much loved and very dear brother Severinus :

“The letter of your Fraternity, though very late, and not such as I had hoped for, I received with gladness ; and still greater was the gladness I felt, when I found that your servant had come to Hippo for the sole purpose of bringing me your letter. I thought indeed, not without reason, that you would recall our kinship ; or, maybe (for I know your prudence), you perceive how sad a thing it is that we, who are brothers according to the flesh, should not live in the body of Christ in one society ; especially as it is easy for you to attend, and see the City seated on a mountain and which the Lord says in the Gospel, cannot be hid. That City is the Catholic Church ; hence in Greek it is called *καθολική* because it is diffused over the whole world. Of this Church it is not lawful for any one to be ignorant, and therefore according to the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, it cannot be hid.” After explaining briefly how the Church of the Donatists is not a part of

¹ He calls him brother.

the Catholic Church, but a section cut off, the Saint continues: "I know not, Severinus, my brother, what carnal friendship detains you there. For a long time have I grieved, for a long time have I sighed, especially when revolving in mind your discretion; and long have I desired to speak with you about this matter. What profiteth well-being and the kinship of time, if in our kinship we despise the eternal inheritance of Christ and the well-being that lasts forever? But let these things be enough for me to have written now. They are very little, and almost nothing, for hearts that are hard; but for your mind, which I know well, they are much and very great; for these things are not mine,—I am nothing but one hoping for the mercy of God; they are the Almighty's, and whosoever, in this life, despises the Almighty as a Father, shall find Him, in the life to come, a Judge." (Ep. 52, alias 170.)

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